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New York (N.Y.) Mayor's
Unemployment Committee
Report of the Bundle Day

Report of the Bundle Day Committee of the Mayor's...

[New York]

[1915]

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Report of the

# Bundle Day Committee

of the Mayor's Unemployment Committee



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UNDLE DAY originated in New York as a result of a visit made by a member of the Committee to Cincinnati on January 18, 1915, when Bundle Day was in progress.

A Bundle Day Committee was organized, comprising Mrs. Vincent Astor, Mrs. Peter Cooper Hewitt, Miss Frances A. Kellor, Mrs. James Speyer, Mrs. Willard Straight, Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt, and Mrs. Cabot Ward. Mrs. Speyer served as Chairman until March 6th\*, Miss Kellor as Member in Charge, and Mr. Nicholas Biddle acted as Treasurer.

The first announcement that Bundle Day would be held on February 4th, was made by Colonel Theodore Roosevelt at a mass meeting on unemployment, held at the Metropolitan Opera House, January 26th, at which Mayor Mitchel presided.

The following is the report of the work of the Committee from January 26th to March 10th, when the various head-quarters were closed:

#### 1.—ADVERTISING.

At the beginning it was recognized that success would depend apon effective advertising, and upon efficient distribution of clothing. The matter was laid before Mr. Rodman Wanamaker, who offered the services and facilities of the John Wanamaker Store, including its advertising and delivery departments. Mr. Joseph H. Appel of Wanamaker's, took charge of the advertising campaign, and with the cooperation of the Committee, obtained free advertising space in the following newspapers: The Herald, The Sun, The American, The Globe, The Mail, The Journal of Commerce, The Press, The Evening Post, The Evening Sun, The Evening Journal, The Brooklyn Times, the New York Staats Zeitung, O'Flaherty's Suburban List, the Morning Telegraph, The Evening Telegram, The German Herald, The Bronx Home News, The German Journal, The Brooklyn Citizen, and the Brooklyn Standard Union. Advertising continued for a period of five days, and included half-page and quarter-page display advertisements, cartoons, and stories on unemployment conditions.

\*On this date Mrs. Speyer resigned from the Committee.

Before Bundle Day, news stories consisted of the Committee's plans, arrangements for collecting bundles, and special appeals made to the Committee for clothing. After headquarters were opened, most of the papers had daily stories, many of them illustrated, regarding the progress of the work. Mayor Mitchel wrote a letter of endorsement which was displayed upon the screens of 600 moving picture houses throughout the city on the Saturday and Sunday preceding Bundle Day. The slides were delivered by 30 messenger boys whose services were contributed by Mr. Clarence Mackay. Posters and advertisements were placed in shop windows, railway stations, upon wagons, and in subway and elevated cars. Special linen placards were carried by the wagons of the American, Adams, and Wells-Fargo Express companies. The same wagons were used later for the collection of bundles, which privileges were secured through Mr. Cornelius Vanderbilt.

An effective method of advertising was the use of tags, the top of which could be torn off and tied to a bundle. These tags were distributed to school children, and in churches, theatres, hotels, department stores, etc. A number of stores including Park & Tilford, Bloomingdale Bros., United Cigar Stores, Adams-Flanigan Co., John Wanamaker, Gimbel Brothers, Best & Co., Lord & Taylor, B. Altman & Co., Koch & Co., and Stern Brothers, put tags in every purchase package for two days preceding Bundle Day. The number of tags distributed was 1,020,000.

#### 2.—BUILDINGS.

Through the coöperation of Mr. Robert Goelet, Mr. Murphy gave the Committee the use of the seven-story Mark Cross Building at 210 Fifth Avenue; Mr. Hallenbeck added the use of the three-story premises at 208 Fifth Avenue; and two floors at 206 Fifth Avenue were contributed by the St. John Park Realty Co., making three adjoining buildings available. Anticipating the need of storage rooms, the Committee selected the following three buildings from among the many offered: Mr. Vincent Astor's four lofts at 44 East 14th Street, Messrs. Klein and Jackson's first floor and basement of 20,000 square feet at 76 Fifth Avenue, and Mr. Wanamaker's first floor at 746 Broadway. Mr. I. T. Bush set aside a part of the Bush Terminal for the storage of Brooklyn bundles. The Committee has, therefore, had seven buildings under its management, necessitating the supervision of eighteen separate floors.

The Mark Cross Building was selected for administration headquarters because the vacant buildings adjoining and Madison Square together provided space for thousands of people, thus preventing congestion in the streets. The buildings, moreover, all had entrances or exits upon two streets.

#### 3.—COLLECTION OF BUNDLES.

Enormous quantities of clothing, new and old, were left at headquarters even before Bundle Day. One such contribution contained a thousand pairs of men's new shoes from Mr. Emerson McMillin, and others contained several dozens of new articles.

But most of the bundles had to be collected and in the organization of the traffic arrangements it was necessary to provide: (1) temporary collection stations conveniently located throughout the city where the individual bundle could be deposited; (2) permanent receiving stations for storage and sorting purposes; (3) an adequate number of trucks, delivery wagons and automobiles to bring bundles to the storehouses and to answer emergency "calls"; (4) distribution centers covering every part of the city where applicants for clothing could call for their parcels, and (5) an adequate service to transport these parcels from headquarters to the district distribution centers.

- 1. Collection Stations. Bundles were collected at 240 public schools in Manhattan, the Bronx and Brooklyn; at 99 parochial schools in Manhattan and the Bronx; at 89 police stations in all boroughs, and at the terminals of seven railroad lines entering New York City. Wagons stopped at all residences where American flags were hung out of windows to indicate that bundles were ready, while at four subway express stations were placed large vans for collection purposes. Several department stores opened "Bundle Day Stations" and advertised that they would call for parcels. In addition, 25 stables of the New York City Department of Streets were used as temporary stations for the bundles collected from public schools. Everything collected at these stables and stores was brought later to one of the Committee's storage buildings. This system prevented congestion of traffic at headquarters on Bundle Day.
- 2. Delivery Wagons. The following agencies contributed wagons, trucks or vans for the collection of bundles: The Department of Parks and the Department of Street Cleaning; Adams Express Company, American Express Company and the Wells-Fargo Express Company; the department stores of John Wanamaker, Gimbel Brothers, B. Altman & Company, R. H. Macy & Company, Hearn

& Son, Best & Company, Saks & Company, H. C. F. Koch & Company, Adams-Flanigan Company, Frederick Loeser & Company, A. D. Mathews' Sons; the vans of the Ansonia, Colonial, Washington Heights and Dochterman Companies; The Sanford Motor Company; and Brown's Newport Express Company. In addition, 25 Boy Scouts, 25 Postal Telegraph messengers, and 25 American District Telegraph messengers were available for emergency calls.

The various delivery wagons were assigned to certain districts along their daily routes, and collected bundles from schools, police stations, and residences. Trucks were held at headquarters for emergency use ready to respond to calls from heavy collection districts.

Subway stations and railway stations were given a regular detail of wagons, and 490 paper carts loaned by the city collected all bundles that were left over. More than 1,500 calls came in by telephone, and these were districted every hour and assigned to the proper delivery routes. On Bundle Day more than 1,000 vehicles of all descriptions were collecting bundles systematically, under the direction of Joseph Mayper, the Traffic Manager. The collection lasted more than a week.

In addition to regular "Bundle Day," a number of supplemental "bundle days" were held covering several days. The John Wanamaker store held one for its employees; the United Cigar Stores collected bundles, the hotels invited their guests to contribute, and some of the colleges held bundle days. From these various sources, the Committee received many thousand additional bundles. So urgent was the need for clothing that the principals of several schools telephoned to ask if they might open the bundles and distribute them at once to their pupils.

#### 4.—ORGANIZATION.

At the close of collections the Committee found that it had six buildings full of bundles to be distributed. Requests for clothing were coming in so fast that the Committee was anxious to begin the distribution without loss of time. In other Bundle Day campaigns, the time elapsing between the collection and distribution of clothing had been one week or over. In New York this record was reduced by one-half, and headquarters were opened for distribution three and one-half days after collection day. This was made possible through the offer of Mr. Wanamaker to furnish a staff of skilled employees to open, sort, size, and assemble into groups the many thousand articles of clothing. He also furnished the entire delivery service which carried the garments to their destinations.

The administration was divided into two sections, known as the Wanamaker section and the Committee section.

The Wanamaker Section took charge of the furniture equipment and of the labor force necessary to open, sort and size the clothing; the preparation of schedules, the assembling and wrapping of goods and the delivery of orders to police stations. With the exception of the executives furnished by Mr. Wanamaker from his own staff, the wages of this force, averaging 400 employees daily, were paid by the Committee, under Mr. Wanamaker's direction. This force included many experienced Salvation Army workers and the Committee is especially indebted to this organization for both day and night service, as the work was carried on for many days in both day and night shifts.

The Committee Section devised, planned and executed the method of distribution. This consisted of nine divisions: (1) Mail Order Department, comprising all requests for clothing, relief and work, This was in charge of Mr. R. K. Forsyth, assisted by twelve expert schedule writers from Mr. Wanamaker's, and a number of volunteers; (2) Office Department, comprising all matters relating to contributions, printing, stationery, supplies and accounts; (3) Building Department, where all matters of facilities, heat, light, storage, etc., were handled: (4) Social Agencies Department, to which all requests from churches, city departments, settlements, trade unions, relief societies, schools, police and miscellaneous requests were referred. (5) Traffic Department, covering all matters of transportation, in charge of Mr. Mayper in New York, and Mr. DeAngel in Brooklyn; (6) Publicity Department, including press notices and information desk, in charge of Miss Lape; (7) Personal Applications Department, including emergency orders, in charge of Mr. and Mrs. Crosby, of the University Settlement: (8) Volunteer Workers' Department, which dealt with those who wished to give part time service; (9) Repair Shop Department, including sewing room, cobbler shop and tailor shop, in charge of Miss Rhodes. With the exception of Mr. Forsyth, the full time services of all these department heads were donated, seven of them through the courtesy of the Committee for Immigrants in America, and two through the University Settlement. It was found necessary to employ a staff of clerks, stenographers, addressers, etc., numbering some 20 persons.

#### 5.—DISTRIBUTION.

In Cincinnati, and other cities, the method of distribution had been through a pay store while all free clothing had been given out on an order from the Associated Charities. This had resulted, as it appeared to the Committee, in two difficulties: Those able to buy had waited long hours in the street, often returning several times before they could be admitted. Secondly, no provision had been made for the self-respecting man and woman out of work for the first time

who would not apply at a charitable society or stand in the street. Upon request of the Committee, Dr. Geier, in charge of Bundle Day in Cincinnati, was called into consultation, and Dr. Lee K. Frankel was asked to give his advice upon the method of distribution. A conference was held with representatives of the Charity Organization Society, the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, and the United Hebrew Charities. The system finally adopted by the Committee was as follows:

(1).-Mail Orders, by which a printed order for clothing was filled out and endorsed by some one to whom the applicant was known. This was mailed to headquarters or left there in person. The schedule writers then copied it, a shopper took it through the store, and collected the garments called for, which were then checked as correct, and sent to the wrapping desk. In order to avoid "fake" addresses and "cribs," to which clothing might be diverted, each person was requested to call at the nearest precinct police station, of which there are 89, and claim his bundle, this privilege having been granted through the cooperation of Police Commissioner Woods. To prevent people claiming bundles other than their own, when the Wanamaker delivery wagons took the bundles, a notice was sent the applicant in a 2-cent stamped envelope to avoid publicity, and stealing notices. This notice had to be presented by the recipient to the precinct captain between 3 and 9 p. m. in order to obtain the bundle. All bundles not called for within five days were to be collected by delivery wagons and returned to headquarters to be redistributed. To lighten the work of the police officials, 650 churches were asked to detail volunteers to the various stations from 3 to 9 daily. 149 responded, designating 417 workers whose duties were also to help such unemployed persons as might apply there for aid. The enthusiasm, cooperation and sympathy of the precinct police officials have fully justified the experi-

The number of mail orders filled was 18,341. Three thousand others could only be partly filled, and sometimes not at all, as the Committee had not enough clothing of the kind demanded.

(2).—Relief Agencies. There are many organizations in the city that deal with the relief of the unemployed, many of whom would shrink from any publicity. Order blanks were sent to these organizations, so that they might either issue mail order blanks to their applicants or send in bulk orders for clothing to distribute to their own people. These included social agencies, churches, public schools, hospitals, settlements, parochial schools, etc. Blanks were sent to more than 100 such organizations that constituted themselves distributing centres. More than 200,000 articles of clothing were thus sent out.

One illustration of the value of cooperation from city departments

and educational organizations was found in handling the school children problem. Through the coöperation of Superintendent Maxwell, blanks were furnished to public school principals, and through the coöperation of Rt. Rev. Monsignor Mooney, to parochial schools; mail orders containing appeals for clothing for children of school age between six and sixteen were filled only upon requests from teachers or by sending clothing in bulk to the schools. This eliminated two difficulties: First—duplication, as families were found applying both in person and by mail order; Second—an opportunity was given to examine the clothing and better adapt it to the needs of the applicants. Some delay was occasioned at first by the fact that applications for clothes were made at the schools before the school orders could be sent in and filled. By this method clothing was sent to 147 public schools and 38 parochial schools, while some fifty other schools sent individual children to headquarters.

(3).- Emergency Requests. The third method was made necessary by the unusual conditions that prevailed, and the Committee was somewhat doubtful of its success. It was found necessary to meet the needs of homeless men and women not attached to any organization, and with no address; those who could not wait for a mail order delivery or take time to visit a charitable society and await its investigation. Among these were people who had jobs in immediate prospect. people who were ill, themselves, or had illness in their homes, and those who had come long distances with babies. Such cases were taken care of by means of emergency orders presented at the desk and filled out while the applicant waited. Numbered coupons were sent out to relief agencies, which, when endorsed by them, were exchanged at headquarters for emergency orders; homeless men were required to have the endorsements of the Municipal Lodging House, or of a church, workshop, or other accredited organization. The requirement that homeless men should register at the Municipal Lodging House aroused considerable opposition and criticism, but when second-hand clothes dealers were found in line disguised as homeless men and evicted from the lodging house, it became apparent that some such precaution was necessary. Immigrant men were required to apply at the Immigrant Relief Station at 130 Broad Street for clothing, or bring an endorsement from this agency to headquarters. During the first week, nearly 2,500 people a day passed through the building with these emergency orders or coupons, and during the two and a half weeks of distribution, some 23,000 persons applied. This application division was in charge of Mr. and Mrs. Crosby of the University Settlement with a staff of eight assistants and was admirably handled.

Some of these applicants proved to be repeaters or were not found to be in urgent need. To eliminate the danger of clothing being

pawned, Commissioner Bell, of the Department of Licenses, had a stamp made, reading: "Bundle Day Committee—Not to be Pawned or Sold." This was stamped upon all articles of importance. He asked the coöperation of the pawn-brokers and second-hand dealers, notified them of this action and stood ready to confiscate the property of the Committee whenever it was found in their hands, and, if necessary, revoke their license. Men were also required to leave their old coats and shoes and wear the new ones away.

To facilitate this emergency work, a building route was mapped out, women and children being received in the morning and men in the afternoon. 210 Fifth Avenue was used exclusively for women and children who waited there for their bundles, while the men, after having their orders O. K.'d, passed into the next building, where they were supplied. The need of taking care of so many people at once made successful fitting difficult, except in the case of men's coats and shoes, and an exchange department was created to remedy misfits. More than 5,000 emergency orders were filled, covering three times this number of persons.

The basis of selection of clothing was the occupation of the applicant. The Committee estimates from its records that it distributed over 2,000,000 articles of clothing, serving some 300,000 people in Manhattan and the Bronx, and it was inevitable that some dissatisfaction should result.

The Committee at one time discussed the advisability of having a salesroom for those who preferred to pay small sums, but the urgent need, the small number of offers to purchase, and the existence of the Home Relief Shop, made this seem inadvisable. A small quantity of clothes was set aside for special needs and has been distributed mainly through such organizations as the Rehearsal Society, Three Arts Club and Actors' Fund Association. The Committee also received such clothing as rugs, shawls, wrappers, blankets and woollen things, especially adapted to the sick, and special care was taken to send these to individuals and institutions that would use them for this purpose. Never has a city shown more excellent discrimination as to the needs of the unemployed, and, contrary to some expectations, the apparel received was useful and much of it in extraordinary good condition.

When all orders that could be satisfactorily handled were filled, the Committee found that it had a considerable amount of odds and ends of clothing, clothing out of season, odd sizes, etc. This was divided into three equal parts and distributed to organizations representing the Jewish, Catholic and Protestant faiths. Clothing requiring cleaning or in such condition as to make its value doubtful was given to the Salvation Army, and the rags were sold to this organization.

#### 6.—EMPLOYMENT.

The Committee conducted an effective workshop employing about 400 people at \$1 a day opening bundles, sorting merchandise, sizing and distributing clothing. They were all drawn from the ranks of the unemployed, excepting the managers and assistants furnished by Mr. Wanamaker. In addition to this a repair shop employing 70 to 100 people a day has been operated, consisting of a sewing room, a tailor and a cobbler's shop. As far as possible, clothing has been sent to these shops for repair, cleaning and pressing before being sent out, but the demand has been so great and the season so late that much of it has necessarily gone out without such attention.

In addition to its own workshop, the Committee has been the means of furnishing materials to other shops which had wage appropriations but no work. About 2,000 unopened bundles were sent to the Mayor's Emergency Workshop for men on the East Side and 200 were sent to the Emanuel Sisterhood workshop. A number of manufacturers sent the Committee materials to be made into children's clothing, and 252 pieces of woollens, 6 boxes and one barrel of cotton material, and one box of thread, buttons, etc., were sent to the Mayor's Committee at 154 Hester Street. These will be made up into children's garments and be distributed through the Children's Aid Societies.

The Committee received 788 requests for work which were referred to the Municipal Employment Bureau.

#### 7.—RELIEF.

It was inevitable that the Committee should receive numerous requests for relief, and a division was created to care for that work. Besides the letters showing desperate conditions at home because of the unemployment of the wage earning members of families, many critical situations of starvation or impending eviction were revealed by the men and women applying in person for clothing at headquarters. Merely filling the clothing requisition was plainly an inadequate response to such urgent need. Within the period of two weeks, 68

eviction complaints and 282 other requests for help were investigated. These were referred as follows:

Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor	26
United Hebrew Charities	14
Brooklyn Bureau of Charities	47
New York Association for the Blind	1
Entered at Hospitals	3
Charity Organization Society	3
Churches	112
St. Vincent de Paul Society	76

Through the generosity of a donor who stipulated that her contribution should be used for direct relief work without going to the Committee and without the revelation of her name, a squad of Boy Scouts and a detail of Barnard students took the most urgent cases each day and reported conditions, and relief was provided by the representative in charge.

It was also found that many of the force at headquarters so recently drawn from the ranks of the unemployed were under-nourished and unequal to their work. Through the cooperation of Mr. George McAneny, President of the Board of Aldermen, and the Hotel Keepers' Association, hot soup and bread were supplied to these employees during the last weeks of the work.

#### 8.-BROOKLYN.

A special sub-committee of the Committee was created for the distribution of the bundles collected and deposited at the Bush Terminal. This committee consisted of Mrs. John Williams Tumbridge (Chairman); Mrs. Fredk. B. Pratt (Vice-Chairman); Mrs. William Pitman Earle, Jr., Mrs. Don C. Seitz, Mrs. James S. Waterman, Mrs. Walter Shaw Brewster, Mrs. Mark M. Solomon, Mrs. Alfred T. White; with Mr. Charles A. Boody, as Treasurer, and Mr. John H. Gould, as Secretary. An auxiliary committee was selected by the Chairman, consisting of Mr. M. Maurice Dimond (of Messrs. A. D. Matthews), Mr. Benjamin Namm, Jr. (Jewish Federation of Charities), Dr. Thomas J. Riley (Brooklyn Bureau of Charities), Rev. Edward F. Sanderson, Rev. Henry C. Schauffler (Brooklyn City Mission), Mr. Adrian van Sinderon, and Rev. John C. York (St. Vincent de Paul Society).

The Committee secured the three-story loft building at 174 Fulton Street, through the courtesy of the Davenport Real Estate Company and Isaac H. Cary, their agent. Through the courtesy of Mr. M. Maurice Dimond, of the A. D. Matthews' Department Store (Brooklyn), the services of his secretary, Mr. John H. Gould, were donated to assist the Committee in creating an organization.

There were in all 36,000 bundles and to facilitate handling, the immense floor space of Loft 5, Bush Terminal, was utilized for the first sorting. Here a large force of deserving unemployed men were put to work under the guidance of skilled workers drawn from the Salvation Army through the courtesy of Colonel Parker. Captain E. J. Bransfield, of the Salvation Army, rendered valuable assistance to the Brooklyn Committee, and provided the necessary sorting tables. bins and equipment required. After sorting all garments were fumigated. A similar process was followed at 174 Fulton Street with the bundles received there. The Brooklyn Sub-Committee filled about 1,100 individual orders referred from the General Committee. No blanks were distributed directly to applicants at headquarters. All such applicants were carefully directed to apply through organized agencies, such as public schools, churches, milk stations, hospitals, recognized public charities and societies, special committees, police precincts, etc. The Brooklyn requisition blanks required endorsement by the agency through which they were issued, and a card index of these agencies with the serial numbers of the blanks issued to them was kept.

All these agencies were, in the first instance, supplied with one of the blanks, and invited to apply for as many as they might be able to use to advantage. These agencies were also informed that they might requisition for clothing in bulk or for individual applicants.

The method of treating requisitions was the following: As soon as received and found properly endorsed, the requisition was numbered and routed, the police precinct or other agency stated thereon; a shipping tag bearing this information and name of applicant was attached, and the requisition was sent to the stock department, where it passed through the several stocks, being checked on its trip as filled Finally, on arrival at the shipping department, each order was bundled and packed, and the requisition released to the office for notification of applicant and filing. As soon as there was a sufficient accumulation of bundles under the various routing sections, the delivery vans proceeded without delay to deliver.

About 3,000 requisition blanks were distributed by the Brooklyn Committee to the various agencies and organizations referred to, of

which about 2,800 were returned to be filled. A fair percentage of these were orders in bulk, mainly from the public schools, the Schools Emergency Relief Society, the St. Vincent de Paul Society, milk stations, churches, Public Relief and Charity Organizations and kindred institutions in this Borough.

Approximately 500,000 garments have been received, and about 450,000 have been distributed to applicants, covering New York and Brooklyn requisitions and the balance of stock on hand has been turned over to the Mayor's Rummage Committee, 22 Bergen Street,

### REPORT OF THE BROOKLYN BUNDLE DAY COMMITTEE.

The total expenses of the Brooklyn Bundle Day Committee amounted to \$1,553.03.

Of this amount, \$1,237.28 was expended in labor, and \$315.75 in overhead charges.

Employment was obtained for 893 men, paying at the rate of 15 cents per hour for unskilled labor, and not exceeding \$2.00 per day for skilled labor.

The average daily rate of pay for skilled and unskilled men, during the period averages \$1.382 per day each.

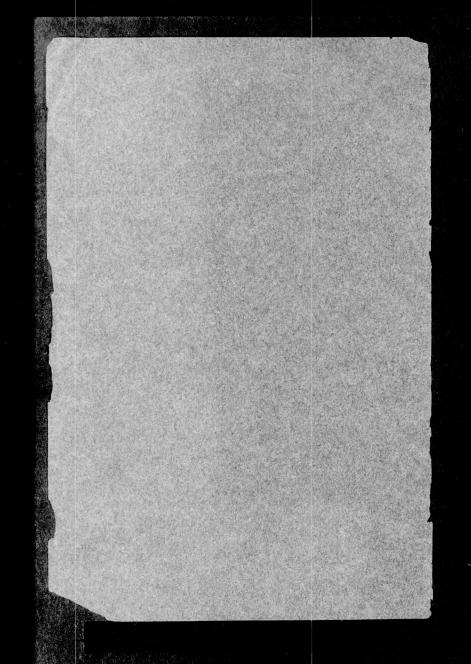
BROOKLYN BUNDLE DAY COMMITTEE, By Mrs. John Wm. Tumbridge, Chairman.

#### 9.—COOPERATION.

For the first time in many years the entire population of New York has been appealed to in a single cause and has responded magnificently. There has been perfect coöperation:—city departments, relief societies, social agencies, churches, both public and parochial schools, business men, corporations, settlements, hospitals, have all joined in one forward movement, by common consent and with enthusiasm, to clothe New York's poor.

As a result of the publicity and success of the New York Bundle Day, many other cities have asked information and advice, on how to organize a Bundle Day, including: New Rochelle, Yonkers, Long Island city and Albany, N. Y.; Paterson, Passaic, Newark, Atlantic City, Orange and Jersey City, N. J.; Ansonia, Derby, and Greenwich, Conn.; Newport and Dayton, Ohio; Chicago and Galesburg, Ill.; Atlanta, Ga.; Indianapolis, Ind.; Boston, Mass.; Ardmore, Okla., and Parkersburg, W. Va.

In closing its work, the Committee desires to thank the many organizations which have coöperated with it, and the thousands of citizens who have generously assisted in providing clothing, work and wages during perhaps the hardest month of the winter.



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